



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Issue 114 – June 26, 2006

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Wildfire season has officially started in Arizona, and thanks to the preparation and coordination among many agencies throughout the state, all incidents are being reacted to in a swift and efficient manner. The Arizona Office of Tourism is committed to keeping our constituents and the traveling public informed of the status of fires throughout the state. Our two main Web sites, www.azot.gov and www.arizonaguide.com, now contain links to www.az211.gov, where you can find the most up-to-date fire information available. As the summer season continues, please remember that Arizona is a large, diverse state, and even when wildfires affect one area, there are still many more places to visit and enjoy. Last week many of us watched as the Brins Fire burning north of Sedona, and I know that we are all relieved to see that the fire is now 50 percent contained and many residents and business owners have been allowed back in Oak Creek Canyon. Fire officials expect full containment by June 28, meaning that Sedona is open for business and looks forward to welcoming visitors to the area.

As the Fourth of July weekend approaches, I want to wish everyone a very safe, happy holiday. If you need any information on what to do this weekend, be sure to check out the calendar of events on www.ArizonaGuide.com. AOT will continue to monitor wildfire situations throughout the state and release information as necessary.

Have a good week.

Margi A. Emmerson

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Calling All Itineraries and Activities

Culinary Tourism is the latest market to emerge within the travel industry in years. The Arizona Office of Tourism wants to know how your community is promoting your culinary product around the state and is asking for itineraries and activities that revolve around a food or drink experience. The information will be promoted during trade shows and sales missions, and will be used to design new regional and statewide itineraries for our 2007 *Official State Visitors Guide*, *Professional Travel Planner's Guide* and Web site. Please send your information to Kristy McKinnon at kmckinnon@azot.gov by July 7, 2006.

Silent Auction at Governor's Conference on Tourism

The Arizona Governor's Conference on Tourism will be held this year at the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson on July 10-12. One exciting part of the conference is a silent auction, which gives industry members the chance to bid on items including travel packages, sports memorabilia and pages of advertising in leading magazines and newspapers. The proceeds from the silent auction benefit the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association, the Arizona Tourism Alliance and the Arizona Restaurant and Hospitality Association. Please pass this information along to tourism contacts in other states to help support the silent auction, or donate an item today. For more information, or to donate, please contact Debbie Johnson with the Arizona Hotel and Lodging Association at 602-604-0729 or djohnson@azhla.com. More information about the conference can be found at www.aztourismconference.com.

Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA) Annual Meeting

This year's annual meeting of the Arizona Watchable Wildlife Tourism Association (AWWTA) will be held at the Governor's Conference on Tourism at the Lowe's Ventana Canyon Resort in Tucson on Monday, July 10. The meeting will take place in Salon 1 beginning at 2 p.m. For more information please contact Karen Bult, Tourism Education and Development Manager at (602) 364-3708 or by e-mail at kbult@azot.gov.

Media Relations Division Attends Professional Development Conference

Last week, AOT's media relations division attended the Public Relations Society of America's Travel & Tourism section conference in Washington, D.C. This conference

covered topics including crisis communications, integrated marketing and how to gain more local media coverage. In addition, a media marketplace was held on the last day of the conference, allowing AOT to interact with some D.C.-area media. For more information on AOT's involvement in this conference, contact Heather Koncilja at hkoncilja@azot.gov.

New York Media Marketplace

Each year, AOT alternates between New York City and Los Angeles in organizing a statewide media marketplace event. Tourism representatives from throughout Arizona are invited to participate in this annual event, which gives media a "one-stop shop" for gathering information about Arizona. The event is open to all tourism suppliers, and participation is limited to the first 20 partners to respond. This year, the marketplace will be held in New York City on Thursday, October 5. The cost to participate is \$800 for up to two people from the same organization, plus travel costs. If you have any questions or would like a participation form, please contact Heather Koncilja at hkoncilja@azot.gov.

Wildfire Update

With wildfire season in high gear in Arizona, AOT is committed to providing industry members with current, up-to-date news and alerts. Grand Canyon National Park is currently under fire restrictions. Wupatki, Sunset Crater Volcano and Walnut Canyon National Monuments are all closed due to extreme fire danger, in effect until sufficient precipitation occurs. Arizona Game and Fish Department has also initiated fire restrictions in 15 wildlife areas throughout the state. Information about evacuations, restrictions and closures is also available on www.az211.gov. Information on national monument restrictions and closures can be found [here](#).

Industry News

Regional Roundup: Denver

A record 10.4 million overnight visitors came to Denver in 2005, up 5 percent over the previous year, according to data released Tuesday by the Denver Metro Convention & Visitors Bureau. While in the city, visitors spent a total of \$2.43 billion at local hotels, restaurants, attractions and shops, up from \$2.32 billion in 2004. (www.DenverPost.com/Business; www.RockyMountainNews.com/Business)

Soon to be Launched! Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender Travel Study

The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) will partner this summer with leading market research experts at Harris Interactive (best known for the Harris Poll), as well as premiere Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender marketers Witeck-Combs Communications to conduct its first in-depth study of gay travel preferences, attitudes and behaviors

regarding destination choices, activities for business and leisure travel and awareness of gay-friendly destinations and brands. TIA is actively identifying additional corporate sponsors who will have an opportunity to help shape the study, as well as add proprietary questions (depending on the level of commitment). For more information, please contact Laura Mandala, Vice President for Partner Research at lmandala@tia.org or at 202-408-2160.

Survey Determines Top 'Chill' Cities in America

Phoenix, Portland and Colorado Springs are the most "Chill Together" cities in America, according to the BAILEYS(R) "Chill Together" survey results announced today. Baileys, the world's leading cream liqueur, and Sperling's BestPlaces, ranked cities across the U.S. based on their "Chill Index," which analyzed and compared the 100 most populous cities to find which residents have the most time to "Chill Together." The study researched both the behavior of a city's residents and the opportunities that a city provides for its residents to hang out and enjoy their lives together. Criteria that helped raise the "Chill Index" for cities were the number of locations such as bars, coffee shops, parks, sporting events and beaches that are available for residents to simply hang out in each city. The top five mega cities, in order, are Phoenix, New York City, Los Angeles, Dallas and Chicago. The top 'Chill Together' mega city is Phoenix, due to its high population age in the 25-34 category, as well as good scores in the category of sporting events and number of parks. (www.travelwirenews.com)

Industry Leaders Testify Before Congress

Three travel industry leaders testified last Thursday before a Senate subcommittee on the challenges facing the U.S. travel industry and the unique role travel can play in helping improve America's image around the world. Jay Rasulo, chairman of the Travel Industry Association and chairman of the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board; Jonathan Tisch, chairman of the Travel Business Roundtable; and Todd Davidson, chair of the National Council of State Tourism Directors, were unified in demonstrating the need to reach out to the growing global travel market whether through a marketing program or friendlier borders. Tisch, who also serves as chairman and CEO of Loews Hotels, said that "at a time when the U.S. is the travel bargain of the world, we are still losing international travel market share." Although global travel has increased 52 percent in the past 15 years, America's share of that lucrative travel market declined by 35 percent, he said. Rasulo, who also serves as chairman of Walt Disney World Parks & Resorts, said the travel industry can be a powerful partner to help overcome negative misperceptions about the U.S. and that "we can't afford not to invest in this form of grassroots public diplomacy." (Special to Travel Advance; www.ModernAgent.com)

Good Morning America Broadcasts from the Grand Canyon

On Thursday, June 22, Good Morning America (ABC) broadcast live from Grand Canyon National Park. The show presented Grand Canyon National Park as one of America's "best vacations ever." The program highlights will include Grand Canyon

history with Mike Anderson (Trails Archeologist/Historian), lodging, camping, Native American dancers, a mule trip and a river trip. For more information, contact Maureen Oltrogge, Public Affairs Officer at Grand Canyon National Park, at maureen_oltrogge@nps.gov.

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